

CAPITOL REPORT

SENATOR HARRY KENNEDY
MISSOURI SENATE – 1ST DISTRICT

SERVING PARTS OF ST. LOUIS CITY AND COUNTY ■ FALL 2006



Dear Neighbor,

It was an honor to serve you again this year in the Legislature. In the pages of this newsletter, I will give you a glimpse of the action taken, as well as a look at what I have been up to as your state senator. The 2006 session ended May 12, and although it was hectic, I was successful in moving much of my legislation forward.

2006 Legislative Victories

Among my victories were two bills relating to law enforcement. Senate Bill 1086 returns local control to the St. Louis Board of Police Commissioners by allowing them to negotiate higher pay for officers without prior approval from the General Assembly. Senate Bill 1059 renames a portion of I-55 the “Officer Thomas G. Smith Jr. Memorial Highway” after an officer killed in the line of duty. The signage cost will be covered by private donations.

I secured passage of two pieces of legislation relating to military personnel. Senate Bill 845 eliminates red tape faced by returning servicemen and women whose businesses have been dissolved due to inability to file necessary paperwork while overseas. Senate Bill 1060 modifies the Missouri Military Family Relief

Fund, which I helped create last year, and should result in more assistance for struggling military families.

Several House versions of Senate bills I sponsored were also passed by the Legislature, and I had the pleasure of handling them in the Senate and working to ensure their passage. House Bill 1732 allows students with severe allergies to carry and self-administer life-saving medication while at school or school activities. House Bill 1827 makes it easier for small businesses to pool resources to purchase health insurance at a discounted rate. House Concurrent Resolution 12 declares May 10 as Hepatitis C Awareness Day in response to the growing concerns surrounding this disease.

Issues to Address in 2007

While I was able to pass a good portion of my legislation, I also sponsored important legislation that did not pass. Senate Bill 1042 would have limited property tax increases over the two-year span between appraisals. Many seniors are on a fixed income and cannot afford the overwhelming increases that have taken place in recent years.

I introduced Senate Bill 794 to protect the rights of property owners. The bill called for procedural changes that would give property owners a better chance to challenge the use of eminent domain, as well as negotiate a fair price for their properties. The bill included provisions to ensure good-faith negotiations by developers and guarantee the right of citizens in all municipalities to petition local government to have the issue placed on the ballot for voters to decide.

Senate Bill 978 would have phased in a change in the way the state distributes your local tax dollars for education, and would have ensured that no school received less local tax dollars than it currently receives. Senate Bill 877 would have provided a tax credit for those modifying a home to make it more accessible for disabled residents. Although those bills did not pass this session, I will continue to work on these and other important issues.

The 2007 session doesn’t begin until January, but I continue to work hard for the people of the 1st District. The Legislature will be addressing many difficult issues, namely Medicaid funding and fraud, mental health services, skyrocketing healthcare costs, illegal immigration and escalating property taxes.

I hope you will take a moment to read through the pages of this newsletter and provide feedback. Your thoughts will be invaluable to me as I prepare for the next legislative session. As always, it has been an honor and a pleasure to serve you and the constituents of the 1st District.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature of Harry Kennedy in cursive script.

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Highlights of the 2006 legislative session

Photo ID now required to vote

(A Cole County judge has ruled this legislation is unconstitutional, saying it violates Missourians' fundamental right to vote. At this writing, an appeal of the judge's decision was underway.)

This November you will need one of the following items in order to vote: a valid Missouri driver's license or nondriver's license, a U.S. Military ID without an expiration date or other photo ID issued by the state or federal government with an expiration date.

If you were born prior to Jan. 1, 1941, you may vote with a provisional ballot without showing a photo ID when provisional ballots are permitted.

If you do not have an acceptable photo ID you may obtain one FREE at your local license office. If you are unable to visit a local license office, you may contact the Missouri Department of Revenue at 573-526-3906 or 573-526-3912 to find out when a mobile unit will visit your area. In order to obtain an ID, you will need one form of documentation from EACH of the categories below:

☒ **Proof of Lawful Presence**

Birth Certificate
U.S. Passport
Certificate of Citizenship
Certificate of Naturalization
Certificate of Birth Abroad

☒ **Proof of Identity**

Social Security Card
Medicare card with current name

☒ **Proof of Residency**

Voter Registration Card
Utility Bill
Bank Statement
Government Check
Payroll Check
Property Tax Receipt

NOTE: You will no longer be able to vote a straight party ticket.



Gov. Blunt signs the St. Louis Police Pay Authorization Bill, SB 1086, sponsored by Sen. Kennedy.

Lawmakers work to fight eminent domain abuse

Over the past year eminent domain has come to the forefront as a major issue facing our state and the nation. Legislators struggled to find the proper balance between ending eminent domain abuse without stifling economic development, and the result was a compromise bill. While I was not completely satisfied with House Bill 1944, I worked with all interested parties to reach this important first step toward real reform to protect the rights of property owners.

House Bill 1944: restricts the use of eminent domain.

The legislation is in large part a response to a 2005 U.S. Supreme Court decision. In Kelo v. City of New London (Conn.), the court ruled that private property can be seized through eminent domain for use by private developers.

Under House Bill 1944:

- Public use cannot be based solely on economic development purposes.
- The condemning authority must pay legal fees and costs if abandoning a development project before the condemnation is finalized.
- The taking of a landowner's home will require 25 percent above fair market value.
- The taking of property that has been in the same family for more than 50 years will require at least 50 percent above fair market value.
- Property owners will be reimbursed for reasonable relocation expenses.
- Any financial gain to the landowner arising from the condemnation of property is tax-deductible.
- An ombudsman in the Office of Public Counsel will be created to assist citizens seeking information regarding the condemnation process and procedures.

Emissions testing restrictions eased

The current emissions testing program will expire in August 2007. However, the Environmental Protection Agency still will require the St. Louis area to participate in an emissions-reduction program. To make the program more consumer-friendly, several meetings were held prior to the 2006 legislative session to gather public input. These meetings led to Senate Bill 583, which was passed in May and will take effect Sept. 1, 2007. I worked diligently with all interested parties in the planning and passage of this bill and fought off destructive amendments that nearly resulted in the defeat of this important legislation.

The bill decentralizes the testing process and will allow motorists to have their vehicle safety and emissions inspections done at the same location. It also expands motorists' options to choose their testing location. Under SB 583, only vehicles with a model year of 1996 or later must be tested. The bill takes advantage of on-board diagnostic technology to conduct the tests.

Senate Bill 583: makes emissions testing more consumer-friendly

Exemptions:

- New cars for four years after their model year, provided that the vehicle has fewer than 40,000 miles on the odometer at the two-year safety inspection.
- Motor vehicles that are driven fewer than 12,000 miles between biennial safety inspections.
- Vehicles manufactured before 1996, but they still must undergo a gas-cap pressure test, which would be included in the vehicle safety inspection.



This year I sponsored the appointment of John Bognar (pictured here with his family) to the Board of Geologist Registration.



Sgt. Thomas Smith of the St. Louis County Police Department (center) and Rep. Jeff Roorda testified in support of Senate Bill 1059, which I sponsored. The bill passed unanimously, and now a portion of Interstate 55 will be renamed the "Officer Thomas G. Smith Jr. Memorial Highway" after Sgt. Smith's son, who was killed in the line of duty in 1997.

'Jessica's Law' adopted in Missouri

In response to the growing danger of childhood sexual abuse, I backed House Bill 1698, bringing "Jessica's Law" to Missouri with overwhelming support. House Bill 1698 will better protect our children from sexual predators and increase penalties for sex offenders.

House Bill 1698: increases penalties for sexual offenders

Under House Bill 1698:

- Bail will be unavailable to those who have pleaded guilty or been found guilty of any sexual offense if the victim was younger than 17.
- Persistent sexual offenders will be sentenced to life in prison without probation or parole.
- The penalty for forcible rape and forcible sodomy will be a minimum of 30 years in prison if the victim is younger than 12.
- Probation and parole will be denied when a person commits first-degree child molestation and the victim is younger than 12 if force, the threat of force or a weapon was used.
- The penalty for the crimes of enticement of a child and attempting to commit enticement of a child will be no less than five years.
- Each registered offender will have to report semi-annually and provide an updated photograph to the chief law enforcement agency in the county of his or her residence.
- A toll-free hotline will be established to report sexual abuse.

Peggy Harris (center) and a group of advocates for children with severe allergies testified in support of Senate Bill 1085, which I sponsored to allow students to carry and self-administer life-saving medication while at school. The House version passed with unanimous support.

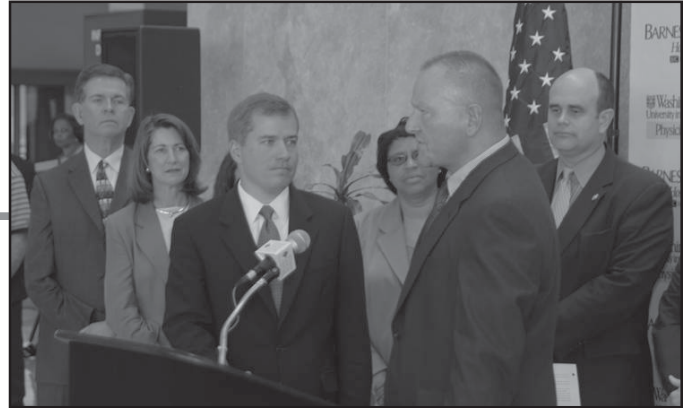


Members of the South County Chamber of Commerce visited the Capitol on March 1. During their visit they met with the governor and toured the Capitol and Governor's Mansion.



I sponsored the appointment of Sharon Rohrbach, executive director of Nurses for Newborns, to the Coordinating Board for Early Childhood Development.

Governor Blunt signed Senate Bill 567 on July 6, 2006, in St. Louis with several legislators present. The bill requires insurance companies to cover phase II clinical trial treatments for cancer. Prior to its passage, insurance companies only covered phase III and IV trial treatments.



Hal Dulle, executive director of the Missouri Veterans Commission, and the Support Our Troops Committee recognized me in May for my dedication to Missouri military personnel and their families.



Douglas Ries, president of SSM Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital, presents the Crystal Wagon award to Sen. Kennedy for his work on children's health issues.



Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church broke ground on its addition Feb. 12.



On May 25, I helped Sam's Club Business Manager Charlotte Bruce present a \$1,000 check to Rick Wassman for the nonprofit organization Ride on St. Louis.

Preparing for emergencies can help ensure safety

The severe storms we had in July showed us that St. Louis is not immune to disaster.

This year I attended a training seminar on the National Incident Management System (NIMS), which was developed to help coordinate response efforts in the event of an emergency.

Preparing before an emergency happens is one way to ensure you and your family's safety in case disaster strikes. By following the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' "Ready in 3" tips, you can make sure you're prepared.

1. Create a plan for you, your family and your business. Identify an out-of-town family member or friend to contact in case of an emergency. You and your family might not be in the same place when disaster strikes, so create a plan that includes a meeting place in case this occurs.

2. Prepare a kit for home, car and work. A basic emergency kit will contain water, canned or dried food, can opener, utensils, flashlight, battery-operated radio, extra batteries, extra prescription medication, a first aid kit with nonprescription medications such as aspirin, special items for babies or elderly family members, clothing, footwear, bedding and personal care supplies (toilet paper, soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, etc.). Store your supplies in a portable, waterproof container. Prepare smaller kits to store in your car and at work.

3. Listen for information about what to do and where to go during an actual emergency. Share this information with your family and neighbors.



I serve on the Joint Committee on Terrorism, Bioterrorism and Homeland Security with Sen. Rita Days.

It is important to stay calm in an emergency. If there is no electricity, make sure to have extra batteries for your battery-powered radio to listen for instructions.

for more information

Call the Department of Health and Senior Services at 573-526-4768, or visit www.dhss.mo.gov/Ready_in_3.

Know the warning signs of elderly depression

As people age, it's not uncommon for them to suffer depression, according to the Missouri Department of Mental Health. Problems can occur when depression is confused with normal, age-related changes, such as appetite loss, reduced physical activity, stooped posture and disrupted sleep patterns.

Older persons often deny being depressed. Either they don't recognize it or they don't wish to share their feelings. Sometimes emotions like sadness, irritability, anger, paranoia or hostility may dominate the behavior of a depressed person. It is not uncommon for depression to be confused with dementia or memory loss.

Underlying symptoms of depression often are signaled by health complaints for which there is no medical basis. Older people often express emotional distress in terms of bodily symptoms. They may say their body feels "heavy all over."

Physical illness and depression can occur at the same time, which can make

diagnosis difficult. Untreated depression can worsen or complicate a coexisting medical problem.

Warning Signs:

Family members and friends need to recognize the common signs of depression so professional help, if needed, can be sought.

- Depression's main feature is persistent sadness that may last for two weeks or more. It will be accompanied by changes in the person's usual patterns, behavior or moods.
- Physical changes: pain, weight changes, appetite changes, fatigue, lack of energy or a change in sleeping patterns.
- Emotional symptoms, such as an overall "empty" mood, apathy, crying without reason or indifference.
- Changes in the thought process and having feelings of hopelessness, pessimism, helplessness, self-reproach or excessive guilt. A person experiencing depression also will show symptoms of slow or disorganized thinking, lack of concentration or memory problems, and

indecisiveness. They may experience thoughts of death or suicide.

- Behavioral changes, such as a loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities, sexual disinterest and neglect of appearance or hygiene. They may also experience difficulty with ordinary daily tasks, withdrawal from people and an increase in alcohol or other drug use. They will often be irritable, hostile, show signs of agitation, pacing and restlessness.

What to Do:

Don't ignore noticeable changes in an older person's behavior or moods. These changes could be symptoms of depression or other conditions for which help is available. Seek medical and psychiatric evaluation, which can lead to treatment that can return an older person to a productive and happy life.

for more information

Call the Department of Mental Health at 800-364-9687, or visit www.dmh.mo.gov.

Q&A Gas Prices

Why do gas prices fluctuate?

- Demand goes up during certain seasons, especially summer.
- The cost of crude oil changes due to global supply and demand, OPEC's production limits and its desire to keep prices at a targeted level.
- Rapid supply/demand imbalances can result in the quick decline in oil supply as demand remains steady, causing prices to jump quickly.
- Our reliance on gasoline for fuel does not allow us to substitute another, cheaper product when prices jump, as we might with food or other commodities.

Why do gas prices differ from region to region?

- The proximity of the supply (most of the U.S. supply comes from the Gulf Coast) affects the cost of transporting oil.
- Local competition drives cost down when a large number of suppliers are present. Customers will likely pay more when there are fewer suppliers or face traveling a longer distance to purchase gas.

My 2006 Senate Committees

- Aging, Families, Mental and Public Health
- Economic Development, Tourism and Local Government
- Pensions, Veterans' Affairs and General Laws
- Financial and Governmental Organizations and Elections

Other Committees

- South St. Louis Region Bipartisan Caucus - Chairman
- Joint Committee on Corrections
- Joint Committee on Economic Development Policy and Planning
- Joint Committee on Gaming and Wagering
- Joint Committee on Public Employee Retirement
- Joint Committee on Terrorism, Bioterrorism & Homeland Security
- Advisory Council of the Missouri Kidney Program
- Missouri Advisory Council on Pain and Symptom Management
- Missouri Assistive Technology Council
- Missouri Sportsmen's Caucus

Kid's Corner

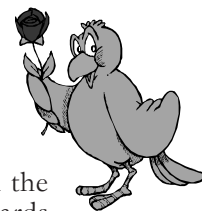
Match each word below with its description.

- A. CHAMBER
- B. DEBATE
- C. SHOW-ME STATE
- D. QUORUM
- E. DISTRICT
- F. JOURNAL
- G. FIDDLE
- H. DAIS
- I. BILL

- [] State Musical Instrument
- [] Number of senators required to conduct debate
- [] The daily record of the Senate's activities
- [] The large desk in the senate chamber
- [] A piece of proposed legislation
- [] Missouri State Nickname
- [] The area that a senator represents
- [] Place where legislators debate issues
- [] Discussion of legislation

...Word Find... "Bluebird"

On March 30, 1927, the native bluebird became the official state bird of Missouri. Find the bluebird along with the other bird names in the puzzle below, and draw a circle around the word. They could be forwards, backwards, or even diagonal! Look carefully!



bluebird*

crow

eagle

finch

hawk

robin

sparrow

*Missouri
State Bird

W	E	A	G	L	E	L	A	R	Z
O	J	W	R	N	H	C	N	I	F
R	D	F	T	U	I	E	T	J	U
C	M	H	A	W	K	B	G	D	P
W	O	R	R	A	P	S	O	P	B
Q	U	B	L	U	E	B	I	R	D

What's on your mind?

The political process depends on the cooperation of citizens and lawmakers. I would appreciate hearing your thoughts on how I can better serve you and the people of Missouri. As always, I also welcome your calls, e-mails and letters. My contact information can be found at the bottom of this page. I look forward to hearing from you.

Comments:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Visiting the Capitol?

If you're planning a trip to Jefferson City, please let us know. We can schedule tours at attractions such as the Capitol, Governor's Mansion or Supreme Court. These places are most popular from January through May when the Legislature is in session, so it is best to schedule tours during this time at least three months in advance.



Above: Little Miss Missouri Emily Bray visited the Capitol with her family on March 29.

Left: Sandy Michels (left) and her friends won a trip to the Capitol on March 8 through a South County Chamber of Commerce auction.

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